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**on behalf of** Orme-Zavaleta, Jennifer [Orme-Zavaleta.Jennifer@epa.gov]  
**Sent:** 2/16/2017 11:08:10 PM  
**To:** ORD-NERL Feds and NonFeds [ORD-NERL-Feds-and-NonFeds@epa.gov]  
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**Subject:** Evaluating the NERL Laboratory Enterprise and Facility Consolidation

Hello NERL –

This correspondence is to update you on recent developments impacting NERL laboratory operations and the associated implications for NERL's future presence in Athens and Las Vegas, as well as, potential impacts on the rest of NERL. As you may recall, in the fall of 2015 the Agency made a decision to reduce leased space in Athens by moving the Region 4 laboratories into government-owned space occupied by ORD, and moving ORD to other geographic locations. Several new developments have occurred since that decision was made. Congress did not appropriate funds for new laboratory space to replace the space being vacated on the UNLV campus in Las Vegas. In addition, in December President Obama signed into law the Federal Assets Sale and Transfer Act of 2016, which requires Executive Branch Agencies to report on space utilization and reduce leased space by consolidating in government-owned buildings. With these events, it became clear that there was no longer a viable path to maintain an ORD laboratory presence in Las Vegas. It was also clear that it would be difficult to consolidate both Athens and Las Vegas into Cincinnati and Research Triangle Park. As a result, we are currently working with Region 4 and OARM to develop a design for Athens that addresses Region 4's needs while incorporating space for NERL to maintain a reduced lab presence that optimizes potential synergies with Region 4's activities, especially with regard to analytical capabilities. Nonetheless, there will be laboratory activities currently located in Las Vegas and Athens that will be required to relocate to a new NERL location starting possibly as soon as next fiscal year. This will require consolidation of some lab activities at Cincinnati and RTP, and, in some instances, a transition from Investigator aligned labs to labs aligned along compatible functions. As we move forward, we will be evaluating options for our overall laboratory enterprise while looking for ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our laboratory capabilities.

Concurrently to our efforts related to NERL laboratories operations, we are also working to identify space requirements for NERL and ORD's non-lab and science support staff (modelers, administrative, QA, technical support, etc.) located in Athens and Las Vegas. Current plans are to continue to provide office space (following the Agency's space guidelines) for these individuals in Athens and Las Vegas.

Over the next few months NERL management will work with OARM to determine where the lab activities currently conducted in Athens and Las Vegas should be relocated, as well as scoping out the consolidations needed in RTP and Cincinnati. I want to be clear that I share your concerns that decisions to move our lab activities impact our staff and their families. As a management team, we have worked hard to retain space where possible to minimize the impact on staff. I assure you that we will continue to consider staff impacts while also meeting our responsibilities to accomplish the Agency's mission in an efficient and cost effective manner.

Jennifer

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